

State Emergency Coordination Center (SECC)

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Situation Report for August 27, 2007

(issued @ 1500 hrs.)



2007 FIRES

Report Includes:

- Background Information
 - Fire Restrictions & Closures
 - Air Quality
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- State Declarations
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Important Websites:

State of Montana Fire Information:
<http://mt.gov/fire.asp>

National Interagency Fire Center
http://www.nifc.gov/fire_info/nfn.htm

Northern Rockies Coordination Center
<http://gacc.nifc.gov/nrcc/>

Inciweb -- Incident Information System
<http://www.inciweb.org/state/27/>

Being prepared: Ready.gov

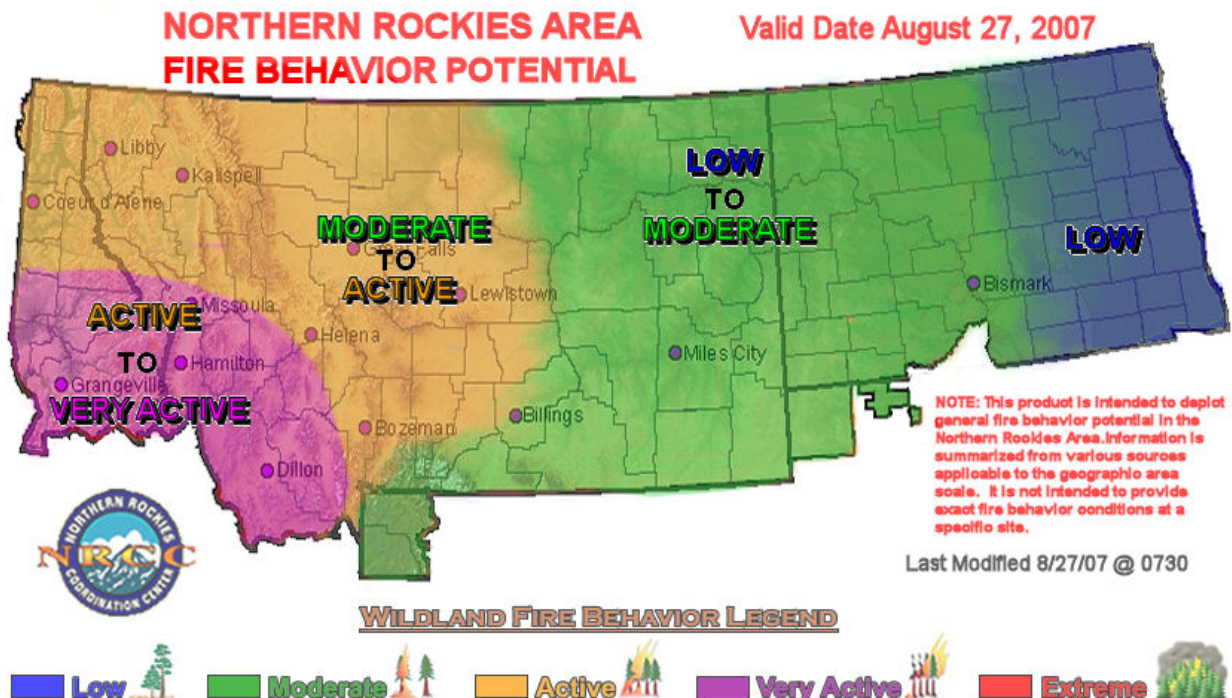
I. Background Information

Since June, hot and dry weather has dominated the region creating very high to extreme fire conditions. Fire Indices are at an all time high while fuel moistures are low. Accompanying the high indices are weather patterns that have set the conditions for lightning and lightning caused starts. High pressure weather patterns over the region are responsible for the high temperatures and little to no moisture. Occasional cold fronts push through the region causing severe lightning storms that ignite wildfires. Rain has accompanied some of these fronts but a return to a high pressure system tends to mitigate most of the moisture received.

Long Range Predictions

Above normal significant fire potential is forecast for most of the Area during August. Fuel moisture conditions should improve during the September through November time period except for eastern Montana. In many areas across western Montana and northern Idaho, downed dead woody fuel moistures are drier than normal and Energy Release Component indices are running near or above record levels and well ahead of normal for this time of year. The Climate Prediction Center's forecast calls for above

normal temperatures and below normal precipitation during August, especially over western portions of the Area. Wind events are likely to increase during August as well. Abundant fine fuels are rapidly curing in eastern Montana and will likely increase the probability for large fire problems during August and into the fall months.



Fire Contracting: Inquiries regarding contracting fire equipment and other fire resources should be directed to the interested party's local dispatch center or Geographic Area Coordination Center see:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/fire/nrcg/agree-contract/signup.html>

Fire Restrictions & Closures: Portions of the state are currently under Stage I or Stage II Fire Restrictions. For definitions of these restrictions, see:

<http://www.mt.blm.gov/fire/restrictions/stagel.pdf>
<http://www.mt.blm.gov/fire/restrictions/stagell.pdf>

Fire Restrictions in Effect (for specific areas):

<http://www.mt.blm.gov/fire/restrictions/index.html>

Air Quality & Smoke: The Montana Department of Environmental Quality issues a daily forecast and discussion of potential smoke impacts throughout the state. The forecast can be accessed at <http://www.deq.state.mt.us/fireupdates/index.asp>.

Road Closures & Travel Restrictions:

<http://www.mdt.mt.gov/travinfo/reports/alerts.shtml>

Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM) Emergency Rules:

<http://sos.mt.gov/ARM/emergency/index.asp>

Department of Fish, Wildlife, & Parks

Current Fire Restrictions

Drought & Fire Updates

Drought & Fire News

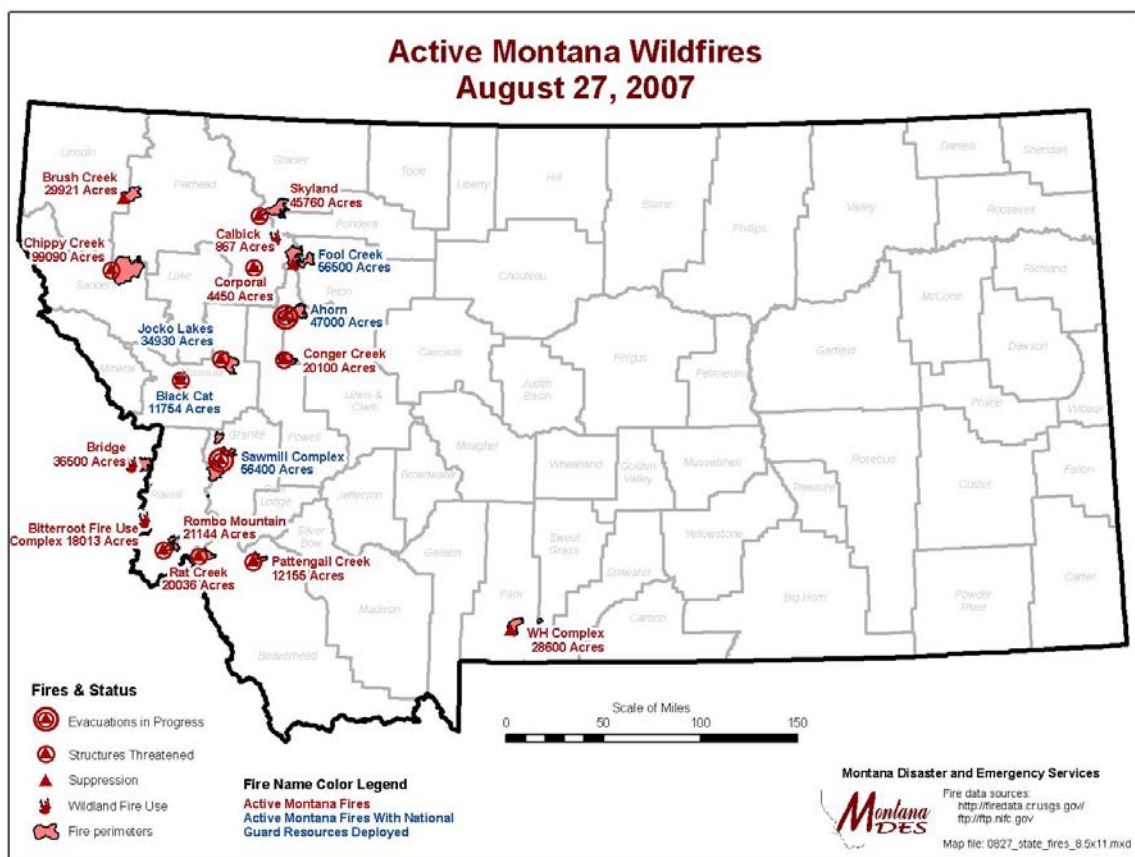
Department of Revenue

<http://mt.gov/revenue/forindividuals/taxrelieffordisaster.asp>

Department of Agriculture

<http://agr.mt.gov/crops/hayFirst.asp>

II. Current Incident Situation - Incidents listed according to current NRCG priority. (This report includes summary information for Montana fires that are currently greater than 100 acres in size. Fires are being dropped from this report once they reach 100% containment.) We have included a link to fire perimeters for the several of the incidents: http://dma.mt.gov/des/Fire_Perimeter_Maps.asp.



Currently assigned to Montana incidents are:

Area Command Teams	-	1
Type 1 IMT's	-	3
Type 2 IMT's	-	5
Fire Use Management Teams	-	3

The Area Command Team (Zimmerman) is assigned to help with incident prioritization and resources allocation for fires in Southwestern Montana. ¹ **All of these fires are included in the SW Montana Area Command.**

Sawmill Complex ¹ (4 fires) is located on the Lolo, Bitterroot and Beaverhead – Deerlodge National Forests. The four fires in this complex extend from approximately 22 miles SE of Missoula to an area approximately 23 miles WSW of Phillipsburg, MT. The complex acreage is 56,400 and includes the Sawmill Creek, Wyman #2, Fisher Point, and the Signal Rock 07 fires. Containment is 15%. Angell's Type 2 IMT is assuming command today. Personnel assigned: 605. Numerous residences and other structures remain threatened. Use Restrictions and Road Closures are in effect within the Rock Creek drainage. Evacuations are in effect. **COMMUNITY MEETINGS SCHEDULED: Tuesday August 28 2007 at 8:00 p.m. Location: Hall Mt. Location to be determined. Wednesday August 29 at 7:00 p.m. Location: Elkhorn Ranch. Thursday August 30 at 7:30 p.m. Location: Clark Ranch, Upper Rock Creek.**

Jocko Lakes ¹ started on CSKT lands (Flathead Agency, BIA), twenty-six miles NE of Missoula; 8 miles W of Seeley Lake. Hoff's Type 1 IMT is assigned. The Jocko Lakes Fire is 34,930 acres and 40% contained. Reduction in acreage due to more accurate mapping. Personnel assigned: 1,076. Community of Seeley Lake, surrounding area, Pyramid Lumber Mill and cell tower are threatened. Structures (8) have been lost, including 1 primary residence and 7 outbuildings. **A public meeting will be held at 8 p.m. Monday, August 27 at the Seeley Lake Elementary School.**

Chippy Creek is located forty-two miles southwest of Kalispell, and 24 miles N of Thompson Falls, MT (Northwestern Land Office, Montana DNRC). Secrest's Type 2 IMT is assigned. Size is 97,090 acres with 75% containment. Personnel assigned: 651. Numerous homes remain threatened. The Hubbard dam road remains closed to the general public, because of fire traffic.

Rombo Mountain ¹ is located in the Bitterroot NF. The fire is located eighteen miles south of Darby, MT. Quisenberry's Type 1 IMT is assigned (also managing Rat Creek and Pattengail Creek). Estimated size is 21,144 acres with no report on containment. Personnel assigned: 206. Residences, Painted Rocks State Park and other commercial property remain threatened. **Highway 93 and West Fork Road are open.** Existing Stage I Pre-Evacuation Notices/Alerts remain in effect. Also, the existing area closure order remains in effect. Maps and area closure descriptions are available at Forest offices, and on line at www.fs.fed.us/r1/bitterroot. **Public Meeting will be held at the Sula Clubhouse, 1 mile east on East Fork Road, Monday night, August 27, at 6:30 p.m. The Southern Area Blue Team will give updates on the Rombo Mountain and Rat Creek fires and be available to answer questions. Also on hand to answer questions will be representatives from the Bitterroot National Forest, Ravalli County Commissioners, Ravalli County Sheriff's Department and local Volunteer Fire Departments.**

Black Cat ¹ is located between Highway 93 and Mill Creek, approximately 2 miles SW of Evaro, Montana. Martin's Type 1 IMT is assigned (under Unified Command with Frenchtown FD). Current size is 11,715 acres with 60% containment. Approximately 762 personnel are assigned. A total of seven (7) unoccupied structures were lost, but

no primary residences were reported as destroyed. All lanes of Highway 93 are reportedly opened today with speed restrictions.

Rat Creek¹ is located on the Beaverhead/Deerlodge NF, twenty-five miles west of Wisdom, MT. Quisenberry's Type 1 IMT (also managing the Rombo Mountain Fire and Pattengail Creek) is assigned. The fire is now 20,036 acres with 15% containment. Personnel assigned: 261. Structures are threatened. **Public meeting will be held in Wisdom, MT on Tuesday evening August 28, 6:30 PM at the Masonic Lodge.**

Bitterroot Fire Use Complex¹ (12 fires) is 15 air miles west of Darby. Perkins's FUMT is assigned. The Bitterroot Fire Use Complex is 18,013 acres. Personnel assigned: 48. Cause: Lightning. Structures are threatened. One structure was destroyed. Magruder Corridor Road is temporarily closed.

BH Fire is 36 miles southwest of Darby. Perkin's FUMT is managing the BH Fire (under the umbrella of the Bitterroot WFU Complex). The fire is 693 acres with no report on containment. Personnel assigned: 14. Cause: Lightning. Temporarily closed Magruder Corridor Road due to fire activity.

Skyland is located on the Flathead NF near Summit. Heintz's Type 2 IMT is assigned. The Skyland Fire is 45,760 acres with 70% containment. Personnel assigned: 362. Two structures are confirmed lost. Evacuations for all areas have been reduced to Level 1.

Ahorn Fire on the Lewis and Clark National Forest in Lewis and Clark County is being managed by Lineback's FUMT (also managing the Fool Creek Fire). Current size is estimated at 47,000 acres and is 10% contained. Personnel Assigned: 179. Evacuations are in effect. Structure protection for residences and guest ranches in the Benchmark, Gibson, and Sun River Canyon areas continue.

Fool Creek on the Lewis and Clark and Flathead National Forests, approximately 30 miles NW of Choteau. Fire is now 56,500 acres with 15% containment. Personnel assigned: 157. Lineback's FUMT is assigned (also managing the Ahorn Fire). Several outbuildings, including a ski resort remain threaten (7 outbuildings have burned).

WH Complex – These fires are located 27 miles S of Livingston, and 10 miles SE of Emigrant, MT. Total size of the complex is 28,550 acres with 65% containment. Bonefeld's FUMT is assigned. Personnel Assigned: 3218.

Pattengail Creek¹ on the Beaverhead-Deerlodge NF, 10 miles NE of Wisdom. The Pattengail Creek Fire is 12,155 acres and 15% contained. Quisenberry's Type 1 IMT (also managing the Rombo Mountain and Rat Creek Fires) is assigned; with 36 personnel. 12 structures along Highway 43 (west side of the fire in the area of Doolittle Creek and Squaw Creek) are threatened.

Conger Creek¹ on the Lolo National Forest, approximately 20 miles north of Ovando. The fire is now 20,100 acres, with no report on containment. Seielstad (Type 3 IC) is assigned with 18 personnel. 13 outbuildings are threatened.

Calbick is located on the Flathead National Forest, approximately 20 miles South of East Glacier, MT. A Type 4 organization (Nichols) is assigned. Personnel assigned: 10. Cause: Lightning. The Fire is approximately 867 acres in size, with no report on containment. No structures are currently threatened, but structure protection measures (for 10 outbuildings) are continuing in the Schafer Meadows area.

Railley Mountain on the Flathead NF is 15 miles northeast of Seeley Lake. (This fire was previously reported as a confined/contained incident.) Kamrud is assigned as the FUM1. The Railley Mountain Fire is 15,985 acres with no report on containment. Personnel assigned: 12. Seven (7) outbuildings are threatened. Cause: Lightning.

Corporal Fire is 18 miles east of Swan Lake on the Flathead NF. The Corporal Fire is 4,450 acres with no report on containment. Oliver (Type 3 IC) is assigned. Personnel assigned: 14. Cause: Lightning. Structures at Spotted Bear are threatened. The Corporal Fire made a 1.5 mile run to the east toward Spotted Bear.

Brush Creek is located on the Flathead NF, twenty-five miles west of Whitefish, MT. Brush Creek is 29,921 acres with 100% containment. Hill's Florida Type 2 IMT is assigned. Personnel assigned: 395.

*** NEW FIRES (Emerging Extended Attack Fires over 100 acres in size)**

III. Weather

Red Flag Warnings and/or Fire Weather Watches

No Red Flag Warnings or Fire Weather Watches are in effect for today!

Definitions of a Fire Weather Watch and a Red Flag Warning:

A fire weather watch or red flag warning is issued when the combination of dry fuels and weather conditions support extreme fire danger. These products are written for land and fire managers to highlight the increased fire danger.

A fire weather watch is issued up to 72 hours before the above conditions are expected to occur.

A red flag warning is issued when the conditions above are occurring or expected to occur within the next 24 hours. <http://www.weather.gov/>

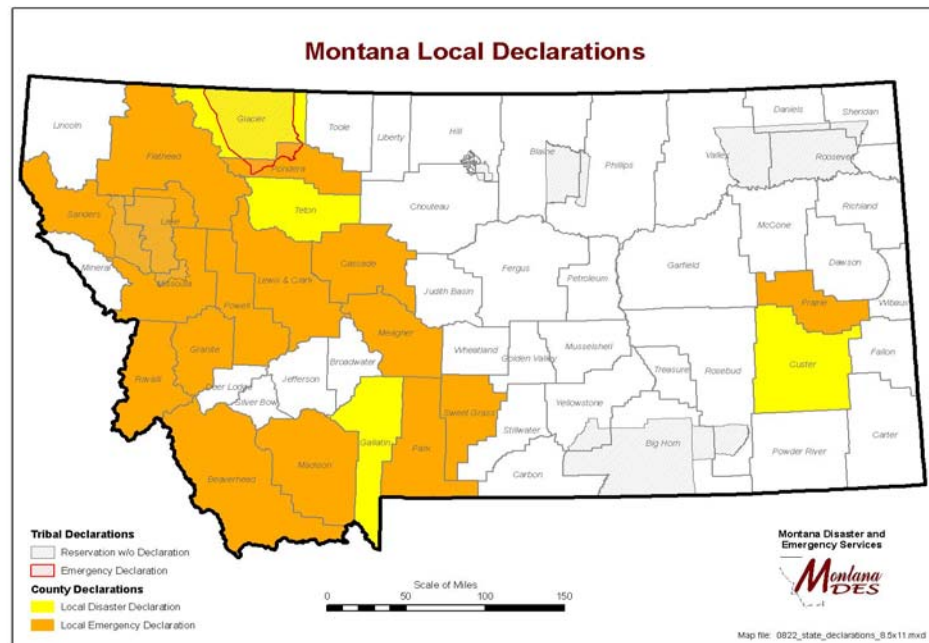
Weather Forecast For current Fire Weather Predictions, see the Daily Outlook at: http://gacc.nifc.gov/nrcc/predictive/outlooks/daily_outlook.pdf

Fire Behavior Forecast For current Fire Behavior Predictions, see: http://gacc.nifc.gov/nrcc/predictive/outlooks/fire_behavior/fire_behavior.pdf

IV. State Declarations

- Statewide Disaster Declaration (effective 8/25/07) due to continuing Wildland Fires.

V. Local and Tribal Declarations



- **State of Emergency.** The following jurisdictions have declared a state of emergency:

Lewis and Clark
Lake
Cascade
Flathead
Prairie
Pondera
Sweet Grass
Madison
Powell

Ravalli
Granite
Missoula
Sanders
Beaverhead
Blackfeet Nation
Park
Meagher

- **Disaster Declaration.** The following jurisdictions have declared a wildfire disaster:

Teton
Glacier

Gallatin
Custer

VI. Jurisdictional Emergency Operations

- All Local Government / Tribal Emergency Operations Centers have been deactivated as of 8/25/07.

- Flathead County's Joint Information Center (JIC) remains open.

VII. Requests for State Financial Assistance

- N/A

VIII. Fire Management Assistance Grants

- Jocko Lakes FEMA-2718FM-MT approved 8/4/07
- Black Cat FEMA-2721FM-MT approved 8/16/07
- Ford Road FEMA-2723FM-MT approved 8/19/07

IX. Emergency Management Assistance Compact Resources Committed

- EMAC A-Team is assigned to the MT State Emergency Coordination Center.
- Two HEMTT aviation refuelers from Colorado National Guard are deployed to support the Montana Army National Guard.

X. Summary of State Resources Committed (through the SECC)

- MT-DES has two employees deployed with Incident Management Teams (through the Northern Rockies Coordination Center).
- Montana Army National Guard UH-60 Blackhawk modules are deployed for initial attack to:
 - Kalispell
- One Montana Army National Guard CH-47 Chinook and module is deployed to assist with fire support on the Meriwether Fire.
- Montana National Guard Security Teams are currently assigned to:
 - Ahorn Fire
 - Sawmill Complex (2 teams)
 - Jocko Lake
 - Fool Creek Fire
- Montana Highway Patrol resources are assigned (as requested) to assist in traffic control and law enforcement support of large fires.
- Starting on July 20, 2007, at 0700 hours, the SECC was staffed and activated to a Level III status with extended hours (0700-1900), seven days a week. The SECC remains at Level III. Outside of those hours, the MT DES staff Duty Officer is available 24 hrs and may be reached at (406) 841-3911.